

## Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2251

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PE, ELAB

SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL WORKER STRIKE - GOP ACTS DECISIVELY

1. THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUNICIPAL WORKERS, FORMERLY AFFILIATED TO THE GOVERNMENT-ORGANIZED TRADE UNION CTRP, CALLED A NATION-WIDE STRIKE OCTOBER 12 TO PROTEST THE BREAK-DOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR WAGE INCREASES AND OTHER BENEFITS. THE UNION HAD DEMANDED A 70-SOLES-PER-DAY INCREASE, THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED BY THE CURRENT GOP-IMPOSED WAGE INCREASE CEILING. THE STRIKE HAS BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL BUT MANY SANITATION WORKERS WALKED OFF THEIR JOBS IN THE LIMA AREA AND FOUL-SMELLING GARBAGE RAPIDLY ACCUMULATED IN THE STREETS.

2. THE GOP REACTED FORCEFULLY TO THIS ILLEGAL STRIKE (ALL STRIKES ARE OUTLAWED DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN EFFECT SINCE JULY). INTERIOR MINISTRY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 12, ATTACKING UNION LEADERS FOR INTRAN-SIGENCE AND CLAIMING THAT, SINCE LEADERS HAD REJECTED A "REASONABLE SOLUTION", THE STRIKE WAS CLEARLY "POLITICAL" IN NATURE AND INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. THEREFORE THE INTERIOR MINISTRY DECLARED ALL MUNICIPALITIES THOUGHOUT THE NATION IN A STATE OF REORGANIZATION. LOCAL MAYORS ARE AUTHORIZED TO FIRE STRIKING EMPLOYEES AND REPLACE THEM WITH NEW PERSONS. POLICE ARE CALLED UPON TO GUARANTEE THE SECURITY

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OF NEW EMPLOYEES AND TO "REPRESS ENERGETICALLY ANY ATTEMPT TO

DISRUPT PUBLIC ORDER".

3. THE GOP CLEARLY DECIDED THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO ACT QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY TO CRUSH THIS FIRST NATION-WIDE STRIKE SINCE THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED IN JULY. THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONVINCED THAT TO TOLERATE THIS STRIKE EVEN FOR A FEW DAYS WOULD OPEN THE WAY FOR A STRIKE WAVE WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. GOP ACTION INCLUDED DETENTION OF UNION LEADERS. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN TOLD BY LABOR SOURCES THAT MUNICIPAL WORKER LEADERS ARE NOW IN JAIL. FACED WITH A TOUGH GOP REACTION AND CERTAIN LOSS OF JOBS, MANY EMPLOYEES HAVE ALREADY GONE BACK TO WORK. WE NOTE THAT UNLIKE PAST LABOR DISPUTES, THE LABOR MINISTRY PLAYED NO PUBLIC MEDIATORY ROLE IN THIS ONE AND ALL GOP ACTION IS CENTERED ON THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE FIRST OPEN CHALLENGE TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROVISIONS APPLYING TO THE LABOR SECTOR HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY AN ORGANIZATION WHICH IN RECENT YEARS WAS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN CTRP "PARTICIPATIONIST" TRADE UNION CENTRAL. SUPPORT FOR THE GOP FROM ITS OWN SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS HAS LARGELY EVAPORATED FOLLOWING JULY'S HARSH ECONOMIC MEASURES AND ATTENDANT POLITICAL SHIFT. LANE

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